

Spiritual Disciplines: A way to stay under the influence or control of the Holy Spirit 24/7- Ephesians 5:14-18

Part 16 : The Discipline of Study part 2 of 2:Inward Discipline from Richard Foster

Devotional Observation Method

The devotional observation method main purpose is to get you to engage the text. You read through a chapter or a book looking for only “one specific thing”. Then you write it down. Next, you read through the chapter or book again looking for something different. Before long you will become familiar with the chapter or book in the Bible.

1. Sins to forsake: A sin is anything that goes against the will of God. There are sins of omission and sins of commission. There are things we know to do and we don't do them (sins of omission). There are things we know not to do but we still do them (sins of commission). When God shows you a sin or sins in your life, immediately confess it or them.

2. Commands to Obey: Commands are not options. They are direct. How many things we should be doing for God and we don't do them?

3. Promise to Claim: A promise is something that God said will happen but it is something you must claim. It is a promise that already yours but you got to claim it. *“And My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land” 2 Chron. 7:14*

4. Blessings to enjoy: A blessing is something that has already happened but you got to enjoy it. Salvation is already ours but do we enjoy it as Christians/

5. Biblical Prayers to Pray: The Bible is filled with prayers. Find a prayer and personalize it for you or someone you love.

6. Examples to follow and examples not to follow: The Bible is filled with many bad examples and many good examples.

7. Teachings on Jesus Christ: What does the Bible say about Christ in the Old and in the New Testament?

8. Teachings on God. What does the Bible say about God in the Old and in the New Testament?

9. Teachings on the Holy Spirit. What does the Bible say about Holy Spirit in the Old and in the New Testament?

10. Teachings on the Church: What does the Bible say about Church?

11. A verse to memorize: As you read the Bible using the devotional observation method pull out Bible verses that grab you or stick out at you. Memorize these verses and make them personal for your life.

Bible Study Method

1. There are many ways to study the Bible. But, one of the most proven and preferred method is Inductive. **Why should we Study the Bible in an Inductive Way?**

a. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. Acts 17:11-12

b. Because we can gain so much more from His Word, precepts and call. Inductive Bible study is learning how to exegete the Bible for all its worth with our best efforts. We do this through teaching people the tools and skills to help observe the text, dig out the meaning, and then apply it to their lives.

2. Definitions:

a. Exegesis simply means “to lead out” or “draw out” extracting objectively what a text is actually saying. In practice with the Bible, it is finding the true meaning of the passages of Scripture from its word meanings and context. It is a tool and a discipline which enables us to get more out of what we read, so we can see a text in its background and then gain the intended meaning, not what we want it to mean. As a tool, it is an examiner and a detective that interviews a passage in a comprehensive, extensive and serious manner. This will enable our better understanding of the Bible that helps us draw out more of the meaning for our personal understanding and spiritual growth. In this way we can better internalize a passage for our conviction and explain it better to others too. In other words, *I want to know Him and His Word, what He is saying to me.*

b. Inductive simply means to use logic induction and reasoning by examining the particulars, facts and essence of a text first before making any conclusions. Thus, inductive Bible Study enhances the exegesis process by enabling us to read the Bible for all its impact, value and significance. In practice, we first examine the ideas and words of the text, then this leads us to the meanings and interpretations, and then we are led to the conclusions and applications. As we are interviewing a passage, we are also allowing His Word to intervene and interview us. And then we are to do this with reverence, respect and humility without our preconceptions or agendas. Thus, seeking what God is actually saying before we seek what a passage means. Then we can apply it to our life in a more effective and effectual manner. In other words, *I want to know Christ and His Word better, to be convicted and impacted so I can line my life up to His.*

c. Eisegesis or Isogesis simply means “to lead in” or “reading into the Scriptures” as in to introduce into the text our own presuppositions, ideas and thoughts while ignoring what is actually there to satisfy our own agendas and opinions. In practice, this is using our personal interpretation or agenda or presupposition, inserting or expressing ones own ideas, bias, seeking what we want it to mean rather than the actual intended meaning of the passage. This ignores the language, context and culture, leading us to incorrect conclusions, inconsistent understandings and also leads to heresies and false teachings. This method enables us to read into a text what is not there and draw out what God is not saying. **Isogesis** causes us to think this way: In other words, *don’t confuse me with the facts; I have already made up my mind, I want to think my way and or lead my life my way not His Way.*

d. We never ever want to do **eisegesis** to God’s most precious Word, that would be heinous at best, blasphemous at worst! The improper use of exegetical methodologies will skew our understanding of God and His precepts leading us to an improper life and false teachings. One should always seek the meaning from the actual original languages (and/or use multiple Bible translations and compare to other passages, do some research) and context and also what it

meant to the intended audience then compare it to other passages to find the authentic meaning. This is proper “exegesis.” Never seek a meaning from modern vernaculars, theological agendas or hearsays—because you will skew the intent that God has for us—that is reading into the text what God is not saying to us!

Check out: Acts 17:11; 2 Corinthians 4:2; 2 Timothy 2:15 and see how God wants us to study His Word!

You can do it!

a. Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

b. Inductive Bible Study is not just for a pastor or Bible Study leader, it is for anyone who wants to know and grow in our Lord.

c. **Some people view the Bible as an un-climbable mountain, a dark cave that is feared to be trespassed upon.** Be encouraged, and be comforted, that you can indeed do it. Through the inductive method, you can climb that mountain and venture into the cave with confidence. In fact you will be able to mine the truths as an expert “exegete” does! The Bible is a diamond mine filled with precious nuggets that can be applied to your life, for a life to be transformed and renewed! As with any mine, you do have to start digging and we show you how to do this. The inductive method has been proven as the best way to find those diamonds, and the more you dig the more you will find!

Inductive Bible study has 3 primary areas:

a. First is Observation: This is carefully going over the text to see what is going on, the “who, what, where, when, how, and why.” It is like training a missionary about the culture before venturing to their new country of ministry. If they are not trained of the culture and customs, they will miss a lot of opportunities, and their effectiveness will fall way short of what they could have done. This is done by teaching you how to pull out the facts through the nature of Scripture and how to avoid presumptions and fallacies, because God’s Word speaks for itself.

b. Second is Interpretation: This is taking what is said and finding out what does the text mean. How to interpret literally in the correct context. That is we never take out of God’s Word what is not there, or read in our will as His.

c. Third is Application: This is taking the plain meaning and putting it to practical use. This is the, ‘how shall I respond’ to the Word. What sin to get rid of, what commands to yield too, the pitfalls to avoid, the actions to engage in, and the promises we are to keep.

* A good Inductive Bible Study Website: <http://www.intothyword.org>

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

General Help:

Josh McDowell's Guide to Understanding Your Bible
(has a good bibliography of Bible study helps, though now a little out-dated)

- * Independent Bible Study, by Irving Jensen
- How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, by Fee & Stuart
- New Testament Exposition, by Walter Liefeld

Bibles:

- ESV: Any copy of it
- * NASB: The New Inductive Study Bible
- NKJV: The MacArthur Study Bible

Concordances:

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance (for the KJV), or
New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance, or

Specific Study Tools:

- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words
- * New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words - Lawrence Richards
formerly called: Zondervan Expository Dictionary of Bible Words
- Eerdman's The New Bible Dictionary
- Eerdman's Handbook to the Bible
- Nave's Topical Bible
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE - get the new revision)

Commentaries:

- * The John MacArthur Bible Commentary
- The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (single vol.)
- The New International Commentary
- The Word Biblical Commentary
- Tyndale OT & NT Commentaries

Bibliographies:

An Annotated Bibliography on the Bible and the Church (edited by Douglas Moo of
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)

Websites:

Bible Study Tools on crosswalk.com -- (<http://www.biblestudytools.net/>)
NET Bible: The Biblical Studies Foundation -- (<http://www.bible.org/>)
Bible Gateway -- (<http://www.biblegateway.com/>)
The Blue Letter Bible -- (<http://www.blueletterbible.org/>)
Bible Study for Spiritual Growth: ICHTHYS -- (<http://www.ichthys.com/>)
Lamplighters International -- (<http://www.lamplightersusa.org/>)

Website Commentaries, Dictionaries, Concordances, and Lexicons(Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries)**Crosswalk**

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/>

Study Light

<http://studylight.org/>

Search God's Word

<http://www.searchgodsword.org/>

Electronic Bible Study Software:

Logos Bible Software Series X (using the Libronix Digital Library System).
Website: <http://www.logos.com/>

HOW TO DO PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

"Men and women of God have always been men and women of the word."

Josh McDowell

Introduction.

"In this day of synthetics, speed, compactness, and brevity, the atmosphere for solid, thorough, independent methodical Bible study is almost prohibitive.

a. For meditations, a few verses are read.
 b. In study, the student exposes himself unpurposefully to the content of a set of detached verses, fleeing to the refuge of worthy commentaries and aids to the point where he masters the aids and does not know the Bible.
 c. In the pulpit, the preacher either speaks a verse-by-verse commentary, or confines himself almost exclusively to topical messages, delivering expository messages only occasionally.
 d. More than half a century ago the same weaknesses of Bible study and communication challenged Wilbert W. White, founder of The Biblical Seminary in New York, to take a method of study and adapt it to the Holy Scriptures -- a method known, and still commonly known, as the **inductive method**. In teaching this method to others, it was Dr. White's aim primarily to develop independent and original students of the Bible." (taken from Independent Bible Study, by Irving Jensen, page 44)

e. There are a multitude of demands placed on the average Christian today which suggest that there is little or no time for serious study. However, serious study of great depth and breadth is essential for staying power in the Christian life, ministry and leadership in order to avoid burnout or falling into sin.

1. Moreover, the committed Christian needs to study at a deeper level than what is required for weekly activities such as church meetings and small group Bible studies, even when finding time adequate for such activities seems difficult.

2. Each Christian needs to study in depth so that he can develop a biblical mind (God's mind or the "mind of Christ") that can give wisdom and direction to all of his plans, management, interactions, communications, etc.

f. Is there a solution to this dilemma? Yes. **The answer is in a disciplined, systematic exegetical study program.**

1. The right kind of study program allows for sufficient depth of study to enable the Christian to grow.

2. It also becomes the well from which he systematically draws for small group Bible studies ... in fact, for everything. A systematic study synergetically provides "context" for the Christian, enabling him to get the most out of each study session for his ministry preparation. That is what this part of the **discipleship process** is designed to give you -- the tools to set up your own study program.

3. Be thoughtful and prayerful about this material and how this can benefit your

walk and service to God. I believe this material, if used wisely and regularly, will make your life much richer and open up to you much greater spiritual responsibility thus preparing you for true spiritual leadership.

THE PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY

Studying the Word of God always demands two things. First a **proper heart attitude**, and second, **the employing of certain study skills at each reading**. Without a proper heart attitude your study will be merely academic; the acquisition of knowledge, but not true life-changing wisdom. Without the study skills employed in a systematic way, your time in the Word can lead to a shallow understanding of God's truths.

Recognize your need.

In Bible study, an awareness of your need is essential. The Bible should be studied as eagerly as a hungry man seeks for food. Jesus declared our desperate need when He said "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Reading a small portion of the Word each day has some value, but for the full benefit to be received from scripture, its truths must be appropriated to your most personal needs.

The delivery man may handle a thousand loaves of bread a day, and yet go home hungry at night; so the Bible reader may pursue large portions of the Word of God with little profit, unless he personalizes it for himself and feeds on it. It is through His Word to us that God speaks to our every need.

In fact, our greatest need is to get to know the One that we have entered into relationship with. Where else will we discover who He is and how we are to relate to Him, but in the Word?

Check your attitude.

In Bible study, your attitude plays a big part. It is of the utmost importance that the reader or student approach the Bible with a reverent attitude, regarding it as the inspired Word of God and not as ordinary literature.

How you read the Bible impacts what you'll take from it. The Bible may be read, or studied, in the same spirit as a volume of Milton, Shakespeare, or an historical work and it will be found interesting and profitable; but the merely literary student, however scholarly or persistent he may be, will never discover its choicest treasures. As the Word itself claims, it is living and active. It is so full that we will probably never fully tap into all that it offers us, but we most certainly will not tap into anything the Bible has for us if we are not Spirit Filled as we approach our study of it.

Paul says, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Make it your source for everything.

In Bible study, your own first-hand knowledge is best. Many Christians are satisfied to receive all their truth filtered through the mind of a teacher, minister, or commentator. They seldom or never, go to the Book of Books for independent study. These Christians inevitably become mere echoes of the opinions of others; they are not "grounded in the truth," and are liable to be "carried off by every wind of doctrine." The Word of God is written to you. You must learn to study it properly in order to feed yourself.

It is a great day for a child when he learns to feed himself; thus it becomes a new era in a believers life when he forms the habit of going daily to the original source of spiritual truth for his own personal nourishment.

Bible study results in strength of character, spiritual strength, security, and confidence. It can change your personal attitudes as well as transform your mind and life. This is maturity. Is there anything else that can have such a significant impact on a person? It is the source of life itself. "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Decide on your approach.

In Bible study, you should seek to understand the deep things of God. Study the Word as a miner digs for gold, or as a diver plunges into the depths of the sea for pearls. Most great truths do not lie on the surface. They must be brought up into the light by patient toil in a consistent, persistent manner.

The best approach to Bible study is to adopt some systematic method. Haphazard reading of a few verses of scripture every day is better than nothing, but it is not real Bible study. It is simply nibbling at the truth and does not lead to maturity. Below are some methods you might choose.

1. The Topical Method consists of the selection of a subject and tracing it through the Scriptures. A chosen topic can be studied by seeking its first reference in the Bible and reading about it in its context there. Then, you move on to the next reference of your subject approaching it in the same way. This continues on until you have studied each reference to your chosen topic. This is most efficiently done by using a concordance.
2. The Biographical Method is the study of an individual or group of individuals found in the Scripture. In this study you investigate everything the Word has to say about that person or persons, learning about their background, personality, responses to God and so on.
3. A Book Study can be done by selecting a book and endeavoring to master it. You must ascertain its authorship; to whom it is addressed; the circumstances under which it was written; its purpose; it's main teachings and so on.
4. A Chapter or Important Passages Study will familiarize you with the gems of scriptural literature. Your approach is much the same as a book study. You must always keep in mind the surrounding passages so that you can be sure to keep it in the context in which it was written.

Stick to your method.

You must have a method as you approach bible study. Without a method you run the risk of not fully understanding the text because your observations are only superficial. A quick, cursory look at a passage does not give depth of understanding. You also run the risk of misunderstanding or misinterpreting when you come to scripture without a method, because your information on a subject will be incomplete. A methodical approach will lead you to the amplification and clarification that other parts of scripture offer. It will also keep you in the context of the specific passage so that you see the influence of the surrounding verses.

Don't forget your questions.

The process you use to do your Bible study will greatly impact your understanding and therefore your application. There are four basic components in every Bible study process. Each involves asking yourself specific kinds of questions.

1. Observation: "What does it say?"
2. Interpretation: "What does it mean?"
3. Correlation: "How does it fit with what has gone before?"
"How does it fit theologically?"
4. Application: "How do I use it in my life?"
"What should be my response?"
"How do I apply it in my relationships with others?"

These questions apply to any of the Bible study methods discussed above.

Prepare your heart.

1. Be filled with the Spirit.
2. Pray that the Spirit will teach you.
3. Study with a view to listen, learn, love and apply.
4. Be willing to obey.

Remember your goal.

The goal of Bible study is not what you may think. The goal of Bible study is not interpretation, but rather application. It is not so much to know something, but to do something with what we know. Howard Hendricks has pointed out that in the Christian life the opposite of ignorance is not knowledge, but obedience. God doesn't want us to obtain only knowledge. God's plan is to move us from ignorance to knowledge to obedience. James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." If we leave our Bible study at the point of observation or even interpretation, we've "short circuited" God's process. We must be involved in application because that is where obedience happens and that is where we see that we are being conformed to the image of Christ.

Finally, remember what Josh McDowell says, "Studying the word of God is much like walking

in the Spirit. It is a steady, day by day growth. There are high points and valleys yet consistency is what pays off."

Begin your study.

There are three parts necessary to complete a systematic study of the Bible. They are:

- * the Overview
- * the In-depth Study
- * the Conclusions

A. The **OVERVIEW** is your initial analysis of the book. It gives you a broad scope of the book or passage. It is here that you will make your first effort at determining why the author wrote what he did. This is called the Controlling Purpose of this portion of scripture and is the most important aspect of interpretation. Every author has a purpose as well as an audience in mind as they write. In order to properly interpret scripture, you must determine what that purpose is. Here are the basic steps:

1. Choose your book.
2. Read it through at one sitting. Do this several times, preferably in different versions.
3. Determine the major divisions and subdivisions, including each paragraph, giving each one a descriptive heading.
4. Make a chart of the book using these divisions (see the example that follows this outline).
5. Write out your tentative guess as to the author's controlling purpose (why he wrote what he did).

B. Your next step is the **IN-DEPTH STUDY**. Here each paragraph or passage will be studied in detail one at a time. To do this you will need to use the following steps:

1. Read the paragraph several times, again using different versions.
2. Determine the context (What comes before? What comes after?) in which it was written, and then write it down.
3. Answer the six big observation questions: "who," "what," "when," "where," "why," and "how," taking notes as you go.
4. Make a list of the key words, paying close attention to the connecting phrases and clauses (see the sample of "Relationship Questions" and "Significant Words To Look For" that follows this outline).
5. Consult an atlas and Bible Dictionary or encyclopedia to gain additional information on people, places, events, and cultural data.
6. Attempt to answer these interpretive questions:

- a. What does this mean?
- b. Why is this said and why is it said here?
- c. What does this imply?
- d. Who or what is involved?
- e. When is this accomplished?
- f. Where is this accomplished? etc.

7. After your own efforts, consult some good commentaries (see the Bible Study Tools list that follows this outline) and compare your findings with theirs.

8. State your final controlling purpose for each paragraph in a sentence or two.

C. The final phase of your bible study is your **CONCLUSIONS**. In the Overview you gained a general survey of the whole book or passage. In the In-depth Study you analyzed each paragraph. You are now ready to relate each paragraph to the whole book or passage once again. You may find that you will need to revise some of your earlier work, but that is normal.

1. Review your work on each paragraph and revise any purpose statements as necessary.

2. Correlate each paragraph's purpose with what went before it and also what comes after it.

3. Review your initial Overview and make any appropriate revisions.

4. Make any revisions needed to your chart.

5. Correlate your findings for the whole book with the other books of the Bible, especially those by the same author.

6. Write each of your conclusions in a few brief statements of how this applies to today and how it applies to you. Commit to doing what you've written down!

Remember what the psalmist said to the Lord, "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*" Psalm 119:105. Now, enjoy discovering the riches of God's Word!

APPENDIX

Charting: Analyzing the "book" context

- A. The purpose for charting:
 - 1. It takes advantage of the eye-gate and thus utilizes another avenue of learning.
 - 2. It supplies a helpful means for recording one's discoveries.
 - 3. It helps to give one an impression of the framework and outstanding ideas of the whole.
 - 4. It provides a basis for teaching large units of material in a limited amount of time.

- B. There is really no limit to using your imagination in developing a chart, but generally there are two basic types: the horizontal and the vertical. The former is generally best for gaining perspective of larger books or portions of scripture. The latter is frequently helpful with shorter segments or units.

- C. Some underlying principles and suggestions for doing charts:
 - 1. They should be inductive, i.e. the chart contents should be determined by the biblical material not the other way around. Remember that the chart is the means not the end.
 - 2. They should reflect analysis not just the words of scripture.
 - 3. They should contain only major terms, relations and ideas.
 - 4. They should reflect synthesis as well as analysis, i.e. the "whole" should be as visible as the "parts."
 - 5. They should be continuous not in sections.
 - 6. They shouldn't be too long.
 - 7. They should include the scripture passage references.
 - 8. It is best to have the theme at the top of the page.
 - 9. They should be self-explanatory.
 - 10. They should reflect the message as well as the form.
 - 11. It is best to make the divisions proportional to the amount of biblical material they are based on.
 - 12. It is best to follow the chronological order of the text.

- D. For further insight see the example included with this outline.

Observation Questions:

(from A Guide to Understanding Your Bible by Josh McDowell)

The Six Biggies:

1. Who?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. Why?
6. How?

Relationship Questions:

1. Are there things that are alike?
2. Are there things that are different?
3. Are there things that are repeated?
4. Is there cause and effect?
5. Is there movement from general to specific?
6. Is there a progression?
7. Are there any questions or answers?
8. Is there a problem and a solution?
9. Is there emphasis by space?
10. Are there connectors?
11. Are there any commands?
12. Are there any promises?

Significant Words to Look For:

(from A Guide to Understanding Your Bible by Josh McDowell):

1. Logical connectors:

a.
(Ephesians 2:4)

Contrast..... but

even though (Romans 1:21)
much more (Romans 5:15)
nevertheless (Romans 5:33)
yet (Romans 5:8)
although
then
otherwise (Romans 11:6)

b.
(Ephesians 2:3)

Comparison..... too

also (Ephesians 1:11)
as (Ephesians 5:22)
just as (Ephesians 4:32)
so also (Ephesians 5:28)
likewise (1 Peter 3:7)
and
like

c.
also (Ephesians 5:24)

Correlatives..... as...so

for...as (Ephesians 5:23)
so...as (Ephesians 5:28)

d.
because (Ephesians 2:4)

Reason.....

for this reason.....(Ephesians 3:15)
for this purpose (Ephesians 6:22)
for (Ephesians 2:8)
since (Colossians 1:4)

e.
(Ephesians 2:19)

Result..... so then

therefore (Ephesians 2:11)
as a result (Ephesians 4:14)
thus
then

f.
(Ephesians 1:4)

Purpose/Result..... that

so that (Ephesians 1:18)
in order that (Ephesians 4:28)

g.
(Ephesians 3:2)

Condition..... if

2. Temporal or time connectors:

now (Ephesians 2:2)
until (Ephesians 4:13)
when (Ephesians 1:20)
before (Ephesians 1:4)

after (Ephesians 1:13)
while (Ephesians 1:16)
since (Colossians 3:1)

3. Geographical connectors:

where (Colossians 3:1)

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- How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, by Fee & Stuart
- New Testament Exposition, by Walter Liefeld
- Rick Warren: He has Bible Study Program on CD. You can order it from pastors.com.

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- ESV: Any copy of it
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Specific Study Tools:

- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words
- * New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words - Lawrence Richards
formerly called: Zondervan Expository Dictionary of Bible Words
- Eerdman's The New Bible Dictionary
- Eerdman's Handbook to the Bible
- Nave's Topical Bible
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE - get the new revision)

Commentaries:

- * The John MacArthur Bible Commentary
- The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (single vol.)
- The New International Commentary
- The Word Biblical Commentary
- Tyndale OT & NT Commentaries

Bibliographies:

An Annotated Bibliography on the Bible and the Church (edited by Douglas Moo of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)

Websites:

Bible Study Tools on crosswalk.com -- (<http://www.biblestudytools.net/>)
NET Bible: The Biblical Studies Foundation -- (<http://www.bible.org/>)
Bible Gateway -- (<http://www.biblegateway.com/>)
The Blue Letter Bible -- (<http://www.blueletterbible.org/>)
Bible Study for Spiritual Growth: ICHTHYS -- (<http://www.ichthys.com/>)
Lamplighters International -- (<http://www.lamplightersusa.org/>)

Electronic Bible Study Software:

Logos Bible Software Series X (using the Libronix Digital Library System).
Website: <http://www.logos.com/>
Online Bible (in both PC and Apple). Website: <http://www.online-bible.com/>

Bible Translations and Their Significance

The English Standard Version (ESV) -- Essentially Literal

The King James Version (KJV) (Authorized Version) -- EL

The Revised Standard Version (RSV) -- EL

The New American Standard Bible (NASB) -- EL

The New International Version (NIV) -- Dynamic

The New Living Translation (NLT) -- Dynamic

The Message (TM) -- Dynamic/Paraphrase

The Living Bible (LB) -- Paraphrase

The ESV is an "**essentially literal**" translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. As such, its emphasis is on "word-for-word" correspondence, at the same time taking into account differences of grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. Thus it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and meaning of the original.

In contrast to the ESV, some Bible versions have followed a "thought-for-thought" rather than "word-for-word" translation philosophy, emphasizing "dynamic equivalence" rather than the "essentially literal" meaning of the original. A "thought-for-thought" translation is of necessity more inclined to reflect the interpretive opinions of the translator and the influences of contemporary culture.